

Delta National Heritage Area Feasibility Study Update **January 2012**

Section 85301 of SBX7-1, charged the Delta Protection Commission (DPC) with developing:

“A proposal to protect, enhance, and sustain the unique cultural, historical, recreational, agricultural, and economic values of the Delta as an evolving place....The Commission shall include in the proposal a plan to establish state and federal designation of the Delta as a place of special significance, which may include application for a federal designation of the Delta as a National Heritage Area.”

A National Heritage Area (NHA) Feasibility Study is being conducted by the DPC, which will serve as the ‘application’ for NHA designation. Public involvement has been incorporated throughout all steps of the Feasibility Study.

Boundary Recommendation

A Public Review Draft Feasibility Study was completed in October 2011 which included two conceptual boundary alternatives. The first boundary alternative was developed by the DPC and includes the Primary Zone of the Legal Delta, as well as add-ons which are adjacent to the Primary Zone. The second alternative is the boundary included in the Delta NHA legislation that was introduced in 2011 to the Senate (Feinstein) and House of Representatives (Garamendi), and includes much of the Legal Delta as well as the Carquinez Strait and Suisun Marsh. Based on the input received from a series of public meetings in October 2011, the DPC meeting in December 2011, and correspondence from Delta counties; DPC staff has made the recommendation to go with the second boundary alternative, with the addition of the city of Rio Vista.

Next Steps

National Park Service (NPS) staff in San Francisco and Washington D.C. have offered to review the Feasibility Study. This review will look for consistency in the Feasibility Study with the NPS criteria for NHA designation. The ‘National Park Service Review Draft’ is being submitted to NPS in mid-January and will be posted to www.delta.ca.gov/heritage.htm. DPC staff will incorporate the comments received from NPS in mid-February into the final NHA Feasibility Study, which will be presented to the DPC at the March 22nd meeting. Upon acceptance of the Feasibility Study by the DPC, it will be submitted to a Delta Congressional Representative for presentation to Congress for consideration of a Delta NHA.